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Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child
Seventy-ninth session
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Item 4 of the provisional agenda
Consideration of reports of States parties

List of issues in relation to the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Mauritania

Addendum

Replies of Mauritania to the list of issues*

[Date received: 22 June 2018]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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1. The present document contains replies to the 20 questions addressed to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in the list of issues (CRC/C/MRT/Q/3-5).

2. These issues will be discussed during the consideration of the combined periodic reports of Mauritania at the Committee's seventy-ninth session, which will be held from 17 September to 5 October 2018 at the United Nations Office at Geneva.

3. The Government of Mauritania wishes to reiterate its readiness to engage in an ongoing constructive dialogue with the Committee with a view to advancing all the rights that are enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Part I

1. Please indicate whether the State party has adopted a comprehensive Children's Code and whether the Code contains the rights enshrined in the Convention. With regard to the National Child Protection Strategy and the associated Action Plan, please indicate what human, technical and financial resources have been allocated for their implementation, which body is responsible for overseeing implementation, and how implementation will be evaluated.

4. The National Assembly adopted the General Child Protection Code on 17 March 2018.

5. Implementation of the National Child Protection Strategy is coordinated by the Children's Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family, through the entities listed below.

6. The National Council for Children, which is made up of key actors in the field of children's affairs and chaired by the Prime Minister's adviser on social affairs.

7. The regional coordination offices of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family, which are the decentralized entities responsible for executing the department's policies and strategies.

8. The regional child protection groups, which are chaired by regional governors, and the district-level child protection systems, which are headed by local mayors. These are composed of the public prosecutor, representatives of various basic social services and civil society, and technical and financial partners. By way of example, in 2017, the 10 regional child protection groups and 30 district-level child protection systems provided support to 16,469 child victims of violence, exploitation, discrimination, abuse and negligence, including children without birth certificates, *talibé* children, children in conflict with the law, children who are not in school, children with disabilities, child labourers, child victims of sexual violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation, and children in need.

9. The financial resources allocated for implementation of the National Child Protection Strategy are shown in the table below.

10. The total annual budget allocated to children's affairs by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family is more than 50 million ouguiyas (MRU).

Budget (millions of MRU)	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*
Children's Affairs Directorate	0.86	0.86	0.76
Preschool Teacher Training Centre	11.85	11.85	11.67
Centre for the Protection and Social Integration of Children	11.19	12.2	13.15
Centre for the Education and Social Advancement of Children with Disabilities	6.0	6.0	6.46
National Nutrition Programme	6.5	6.5	6.5
Cash transfers for children with multiple disabilities		2.94	3.0

11. Investment in construction and the salaries of social workers, preschool teachers and other personnel are not included in the budget shown above.

12. Human resources in this area consist of State social workers and civil society actors.

2. Please clarify the mandate, budget and capacity of the newly established Centre for the Protection and Social Integration of Children and explain how the Centre has improved the coordination of activities related to the implementation of the Convention. Please also provide information on all recent reforms of the National Council for Children and specify when the reformed Council will be in place.

13. The Centre for the Protection and Social Integration of Children currently has seven branches, in Nouadhibou, Rosso, Aleg, Kiffa, Riyad, Dar Naim and El Mina. Its mandate includes the following:

- Prevention of juvenile delinquency
- Psychosocial and legal support for the most marginalized groups of children
- Social integration of children within the community
- Supervision and reintegration of children whose emotional well-being is at risk
- Establishment of a data analysis and follow-up system for children at risk

14. In 2017, the Centre for the Protection and Social Integration of Children had a budget of 13 million ouguiyas (MRU). Its staff consists of social workers and contract workers. This Centre is not responsible for coordinating action taken to implement the Convention; such action is coordinated by the Children's Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family, through the body described below.

15. The National Council for Children, which is made up of key actors in the field of children's affairs and chaired by the Prime Minister's adviser on social affairs, was established under Decree No. 051-2017 of 8 May 2017, which repealed and replaced Decree No. 98/044 on the establishment of the National Council for Children. The Council was originally attached to the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family but is now under the authority of the Prime Minister. Its role is to assist the Government in the coordination, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies and programmes on child-related issues.

3. Please provide information on all efforts made by the State party to regularly and systematically measure the impact of budgetary allocations on children.

16. Mauritania has frequently reviewed its development policies with the aim of continuously improving the living conditions of its people. In 2015, for example, Mauritania commissioned an independent consulting firm to evaluate its development policy, the 2001–2015 Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction. Under the new development strategy, the 2016–2030 Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity, public policies will continue to be reviewed regularly. A report on the implementation of this strategy over the past two years is currently being drawn up.

17. As regards the protection of young children, the evaluation of the 2001–2015 Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction shows that significant institutional, strategic and policy changes have been made in the field of children's affairs. During the period in question, efforts were focused on improving the overall early childhood development framework and setting strategic objectives for the protection and promotion of children's rights.

18. The children's rights protection framework has been strengthened by the development of the National Child Protection Strategy, the design of a protection system based on the reform of the National Council for Children and the establishment of regional consultation platforms for the protection of children's rights.

4. Please provide information on legal measures taken to prohibit the marriage of children under 18 years of age, without exception. Please also provide further information on the scope and impact of the campaigns to combat child marriage referred to in paragraph 77 of the State party's report (CRC/C/MRT/3-5).

19. In October 2014, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family set up an interministerial commission composed of representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Traditional Teaching, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Relations with Parliament and Civil Society, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to take charge of designing and coordinating activities to combat child marriage.

20. The Personal Status Code sets the minimum legal age for marriage at 18 years old. The Government's campaigns to combat child marriage are being conducted within the framework of the Africa-wide campaign against early marriage and are targeted at areas where child marriage is particularly prevalent. The purpose of the campaigns is to raise public awareness of the risks associated with this practice. The 2011 and 2015 Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys showed, respectively, that 37.3 and 35.2 per cent of women aged between 20 and 49 years old had been married before the age of 18 years old.

21. In this context, a national programme was drawn up in step with the Africa-wide campaign to end child marriage. A number of major initiatives were launched in 2014, 2015 and 2016, thanks to the work of the above-mentioned interministerial commission and cooperation between the Government and its partners, especially UNICEF and UNFPA.

22. Every year, to mark the various children's days celebrated in the Maghreb, throughout Africa and internationally, and also on the International Day of the Girl Child, the authorities run awareness-raising and information campaigns on child rights and radio and television programmes on the consequences of child marriage are broadcast. Partners and participants in these campaigns include ulama, gynaecologists, local, national and international associations, the United Nations system, youth associations, the children's parliament and journalists. Various awareness-raising methods and materials are used, including sketches, leaflets on the rights of the child, T-shirts, baseball caps, posters and headscarves with messages emphasizing the need to protect children from the harmful consequences of this practice.

5. Please provide information on legislative and other measures taken by the State party to combat discrimination against girls, children belonging to minority groups, children with disabilities, children living in slavery-like conditions or who are the descendants of slaves, street children, and children who are migrants, asylum seekers or refugees.

23. There is no discrimination against girls, children belonging to minority groups, children with disabilities, children who are the descendants of slaves, street children or children who are migrants, asylum seekers or refugees.

6. Please provide information on measures taken to remove the main barriers to birth registration and to ensure the registration of all children, including those whose parents do not have personal documentation or are stateless. Please also provide information on the impact of the reform of the civil registration system and the biometric system.

24. In order to remove barriers to the registration of all children, the Government has taken the following measures, which are focused on three main areas:

(a) Implementing a policy of community-based civil registration services:

(i) As a result of this policy, almost all capitals of districts (*communes*) now have at least one Citizen Reception Centre, where life events such as birth, marriage, divorce and death can be registered and, in some cases, secure documents can be requested;

(ii) To ensure that these services remain available in the long term, a project for the construction of 168 centres in rural district capitals has been under way since 2016. So far, 120 centres have been completed. The remaining 48 will be completed over the course of 2018;

(iii) In order to increase the capacity of civil registration services in major cities, such as the capitals of governorates (*wilayas*), a plan to build a number of new centres in the four years from 2017 to 2020 is in progress;

(b) Streamlining administrative procedures:

(i) The birth registration procedure has been simplified: births can now be registered on the basis of a declaration made by one of the child's relatives, such as a paternal or maternal grandparent, grown-up brother or paternal or maternal uncle at a Citizen Reception Centre;

(ii) A declaration of this kind is sufficient, provided it is made before the legally established deadline. Once the deadline has past, a court ruling establishing date of birth is required;

(c) Fostering a culture of civil registration:

(i) Since 2010, the Government has worked hard to establish a modern civil registration system that can be used by Mauritanian citizens and foreign nationals to record all life events that occur in the country;

(ii) It has become clear that the main barrier to the registration of all births is no longer the availability of civil registration services (since coverage is now more than adequate), nor the complexity of the administrative procedures involved, but rather the fact that some members of the population see no point in registering the birth of their children;

(iii) In order to raise awareness among this sector of the population of the importance of registering life events in general and births in particular, a programme has been broadcast on radio and television since the start of 2018 by the National Agency for Population Registration and Secure Documents. The aim of this programme is to encourage civil registration among all sectors of the population and thus remove the real obstacle to universal birth registration.

Regarding the registration of children whose parents do not have personal documentation

25. The registration of persons in the National Biometric Register was organized in three stages. The first stage involved persons who had all the necessary documents, the second stage encompassed persons who had some of the required documents, and the third stage concerned those who had no documents. The aim of dividing the process into three stages was to manage the flow of people at civil registration centres and to make it easier to identify family relationships. During the final stage, which has been under way for some time, over 1.1 million persons without documents have been registered. Before the system was overhauled, there were 13 databases (one for each governorate), containing data on fewer than 2.3 million persons in total. The National Biometric Register, on the other hand, contained data on 3,434,153 persons as at 24 April 2018.

26. Lack of documentation is not, therefore, an insurmountable obstacle that prevents parents from being registered in the National Biometric Register at the same time as their children. Moreover, leaving aside those sectors of the population who are not interested in obtaining civil status documents, very few parents are not registered in the National Biometric Register.

27. In order to promote the registration of children in the above category, the National Agency for Population Registration and Secure Documents — the entity responsible for setting up the Register — is working with UNICEF to locate children who have not been registered and to take care of their registration. The mechanism needed to achieve this goal is being set up.

Regarding multi-criteria statistical data

Child marriage

28. There are no instances of child marriage recorded in the National Biometric Register, as the latter cannot be used to register events of that kind.

Registration of children at birth or later

b.1 Registration of children at birth

29. Out of 224 civil registration centres in Mauritania, all 91 centres that are located in the capitals of departments (*moughataas*) and subdepartments (*arrondissements*) cater for the registration of children at birth. All seven centres that have been established abroad also provide this service.

30. The system is currently being improved to enable children to be registered at birth at any civil registration centre in the country.

31. The statistical data requested for the past three years (2015–2017) are shown in the tables below. They are disaggregated by geographic location (governorate), sex and year. Data disaggregated by department are provided in annex I.

(See table below.)

		Children registered at birth					
		Girls			*Boys*		
	Governorate	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*
1	Hodh ech-Chargui	253	125	253	289	135	302
2	Hodh el-Gharbi	243	92	182	232	94	219
3	Assaba	489	273	507	530	310	603
4	Gorgol	692	431	763	795	488	898
5	Brakna	1 698	853	1 563	1 813	875	1 599
6	Trarza	1 026	478	1 095	1 024	519	1 096
7	Adrar	459	251	446	504	274	507
8	Dakhlet Nouadhibou	692	404	909	707	457	996
9	Tagant	287	137	399	270	167	377
10	Guidimaka	279	146	270	267	173	328
11	Inchiri	109	53	123	115	66	122
12	Tiris Zemmour	484	260	496	507	312	536
13	Nouakchott	6 103	3 536	7 224	6 401	3 898	7 785
14	Abroad	82	102	115	95	95	127
	Total	**12 814**	**7 039**	**14 230**	**13 454**	**7 768**	**15 368**

b.2 Registration of children later than at birth

32. This service is provided in all 231 centres throughout the country and in all 7 centres abroad. (See tables below.)

Children registered later than at birth

Year 2015

		Girls			*Boys*		
		Preschool-age		*School-age*	*Preschool-age*		*School-age*
Governorate		*Up to 1 year old*	*1–6 years old*	*6–18 years old*	*Up to 1 year old*	*1–6 years old*	*6–18 years old*
1	Hodh ech-Chargui	189	487	571	223	496	707
2	Hodh el-Gharbi	300	897	1 671	295	980	1 679
3	Assaba	597	2 082	3 465	698	2 280	3 735
4	Gorgol	512	1 791	3 204	598	1 926	3 494
5	Brakna	733	2 001	2 363	807	2 068	2 454
6	Trarza	919	2 257	2 286	998	2 326	2 400
7	Adrar	190	338	306	193	314	347
8	Dakhlet Nouadhibou	229	453	372	220	452	357
9	Tagant	154	279	333	167	280	336
10	Guidimaka	285	1 134	2 220	331	1 289	2 455
11	Inchiri	24	96	82	32	68	112
12	Tiris Zemmour	99	265	215	109	270	209
13	Nouakchott	2 208	5 733	7 278	2 428	6 037	7 515
14	Abroad	129	272	356	130	309	389
	Total	**6 568**	**18 085**	**24 722**	**7 229**	**19 095**	**26 189**

Children registered later than at birth

Year 2016

		Girls			*Boys*		
		Preschool-age		*School-age*	*Preschool-age*		*School-age*
Governorate		*Up to 1 year old*	*1–6 years old*	*6–18 years old*	*Up to 1 year old*	*1–6 years old*	*6–18 years old*
1	Hodh ech-Chargui	102	330	380	138	365	424
2	Hodh el-Gharbi	118	285	448	133	369	457
3	Assaba	259	854	1 523	261	872	1 547
4	Gorgol	239	738	1 297	295	827	1 339
5	Brakna	332	613	749	343	643	742
6	Trarza	322	649	760	318	635	781
7	Adrar	79	148	118	98	163	140
8	Dakhlet Nouadhibou	136	246	245	141	242	238
9	Tagant	69	119	121	62	131	137
10	Guidimaka	100	405	913	118	437	1 063
11	Inchiri	17	32	15	17	25	33
12	Tiris Zemmour	67	189	168	85	165	182
13	Nouakchott	1 017	2 420	3 512	1 085	2 450	3 554
14	Abroad	88	124	169	79	139	151
	Total	**2 945**	**7 152**	**10 418**	**3 173**	**7 463**	**10 788**

Children registered later than at birth						
Year 2017						
		Girls			*Boys*	
		Preschool-age		*School-age*	*Preschool-age*		*School-age*
Governorate		*Up to 1 year old*	*1–6 years old*	*6–18 years old*	*Up to 1 year old*	*1–6 years old*	*6–18 years old*
1	Hodh ech-Chargui	248	840	990	265	919	1 120
2	Hodh el-Gharbi	234	702	863	260	790	936
3	Assaba	441	1 469	2 209	539	1 630	2 543
4	Gorgol	309	1 017	1 582	383	975	1 614
5	Brakna	642	1 016	1 017	721	962	1 061
6	Trarza	649	1 409	1 182	663	1 461	1 306
7	Adrar	177	284	185	193	295	198
8	Dakhlet Nouadhibou	250	652	582	260	639	616
9	Tagant	177	451	320	194	404	305
10	Guidimaka	195	653	1 312	204	785	1 516
11	Inchiri	27	66	70	49	86	71
12	Tiris Zemmour	108	104	89	79	131	86
13	Nouakchott	2 006	4 855	6 487	2 219	5 111	6 855
14	Abroad	179	327	294	193	289	310
	Total	**5 642**	**13 845**	**17 182**	**6 222**	**14 477**	**18 537**

Regarding the impact of the reform of the civil registration system and the biometric system

33. Before describing the impact of the latest reform of the civil registration system, involving the creation of the National Biometric Register, it is worth giving a brief overview of previous reforms in this area.

34. Upon gaining independence, Mauritania tried to establish a reliable civil registration system. To that end, responsibility for civil registration was entrusted first to the judiciary, then to the central Government and later to the district authorities.

35. This approach did not yield the desired results, so a more extensive reform was carried out in 1996. That reform was built on three pillars:

- The office of the Minister of State for civil registration
- The district authorities
- The National Identity Card Project

36. The office of the Minister of State for civil registration and the district authorities shared responsibility for issuing civil status certificates for events such as birth, marriage, divorce and death. Events were declared to the office of the Minister of State, which was staffed by a mix of retired officials from almost all sections of the civil service (teachers, police officers, military officers, public figures, imams and so on) who were not employed by the office sensu stricto. Certificates were issued by the office of the mayor.

37. After a decade, the office of the Minister of State was abolished and replaced by:

- The National Civil Registration Office
- The National Archives Centre

38. As regards the impact of the latest reform of the civil registration system, a simple analysis of the main reforms carried out before 2010, as described above, shows that:

- The civil registration portfolio was always entrusted, as a secondary responsibility, to institutions that lacked the necessary expertise.
- The significant number of reforms carried out in the first 50 years of the country's existence attest to a lack of experience, expertise and awareness in the field of civil registration.
- None of the reforms made were aimed at establishing a dedicated civil registration agency.

39. None of these reforms proved satisfactory. Instead, they created a chaotic situation in which:

- Information was fragmented and inconsistent, there being at least one database for every governorate capital.
- It was easy to commit identity theft.
- It was easy to purchase fake national documents.
- The civil status information given in documents held by a single person differed from one document to another.

40. This chaos was exacerbated by:

- The large number of entities that handled personal data in order to issue either civil status certificates or national documents such as passports and national identity cards.
- The fact that these entities operated in isolation from one another.

41. Overall, it would be fair to say that all the approaches adopted in the various reforms carried out up until 2010 resulted in failure of the civil registration system and the national document issuance system.

42. In order to address this situation, the current Government initiated a project on population registration and the provision of secure national documents, pursuant to the 2009 election manifesto of the President of the Republic, Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, in which His Excellency committed to establishing a modern and reliable civil registration system.

43. This project had three main objectives:

- Preserving identities and strengthening national unity by registering citizens, residents and visitors and providing secure national documents.
- Maintaining internal and external security by controlling and managing migratory flows and by combating terrorism and trafficking.
- Bringing government services closer to the people by setting up one-stop shops for civil registration and the request and issuance of documents, both within the country and abroad.

44. In order to put an end to the chaos apparent in the fields of civil registration and national document issuance and thus ensure the success of the project mentioned above, the Government decided to explore ways to remedy the weaknesses and shortcomings of the earlier reforms.

7. **With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (CRC/C/MRT/CO/2, para. 41), please provide detailed information on the progress made by the State party towards revising its Criminal Code to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment by law and enforce the prohibition in all settings, including in the family, schools and alternative care settings.**

45. The National Assembly adopted the General Child Protection Code on 17 March 2018.

46. Articles 79 and 80 of the Code clearly prohibit corporal punishment:

Article 79: Definitions

Subjecting a child to "repeated ill-treatment" shall be considered to constitute torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

For the purposes of the present Code, the term "torture" shall mean any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental or emotional, is intentionally inflicted on a child by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity, for such purposes as obtaining from the child or a third person information or a confession, punishing the child for an act that he or she or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing the child or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind.

The term "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment" shall mean subjecting a child to acts of brutality that are likely to affect his or her mental equilibrium, repeated violations of his or her physical integrity or deprivation of food or liberty on a regular basis.

Acts that amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment shall include harmful female circumcision and any other similar practices that are performed on girls, and negative customary, cultural and social practices that violate a child's physical integrity, health or dignity.

Article 80: Penalty

Any person who inflicts torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment on a child shall incur the penalties set forth in the Code governing the judicial protection of children.

8. **With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (CRC/C/MRT/CO/2, para. 80), please clarify whether sexual crimes, including rape, are clearly defined in legislation, including sharia. Please also indicate whether there is a mechanism for monitoring the number of cases and the extent of violence and abuse against children, in particular cases of sexual violence, and for receiving, following up and investigating complaints from or on behalf of child victims.**

47. Sexual offences are not defined in the Criminal Code, the Code governing the judicial protection of children or the General Child Protection Code, but rather in the bill to criminalize gender-based violence, which defines rape, incest, sexual harassment, sexual touching and paedophilia. The bill will be adopted in the near future, providing the judiciary with an exhaustive legal instrument.

9. **With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (CRC/C/MRT/CO/2, para. 62), please provide updated information on: (a) measures taken to enforce the law criminalizing female genital mutilation in all circumstances, and to prosecute perpetrators; (b) measures taken to prevent the practice of forced feeding (gavage); and (c) the impact of the national strategy and campaigns aimed at eliminating these harmful practices.**

48. Criminal justice policy and memorandums issued by the public prosecutor's office remind judges of the need to crack down on female genital mutilation.

49. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family has dispatched caravans and organized campaigns to raise awareness and mobilize communities in governorates where female genital mutilation is particularly prevalent, in order to encourage people to give up practices that constitute gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation. This has yielded the following results:

- A total of 6 regional committees and 42 rural committees, made up of medical professionals, imams and community leaders, have been set up to combat female genital mutilation.

- A total of 9 departments and 32 rural districts have agreed to end the practice of female genital mutilation as a result of the communication and awareness-raising activities carried out.
- Training on combating female genital mutilation has been provided.

10. Please provide more detailed information on the measures taken to improve the quality of education and school infrastructures, to eliminate all school fees and hidden costs, to increase the primary school completion rate and to develop school facilities. Please also provide detailed information on the measures taken to oversee the content of the curriculum taught in Qur'anic schools.

50. Since 2009, the Government has made huge efforts to combat underdevelopment and its consequences, namely poverty and ignorance.

51. Bearing in mind that education plays a key role in stimulating sustainable development from within, the education authorities have identified three priorities, in accordance with the sectoral policy statement linked to the 2011–2020 ten-year programme, which was adopted by the Government in 2011:

- Improving the quality of primary and secondary education
- Increasing the availability of education opportunities
- Improving and strengthening the management and monitoring of the education system

52. The table below contains information on:

1. Measures taken to improve the quality of education and school infrastructures, to eliminate all school fees and hidden costs, to increase the primary school completion rate and to develop school facilities

2. Resources allocated over the past five years to improve the provision of basic services in the field of education, taking into account supply and demand

Measures taken to improve quality	*Action taken by the Department*
Production and distribution of educational resources (school textbooks, teaching guides, teaching aids)	• Opening of 80 kiosks • Distribution of 782,000 textbooks • Distribution of 463,880 exercise books for writing in Arabic and French, 20,000 mathematics exercise books for pupils in the third year of primary school, 172,544 mathematics exercise books for pupils in the fourth year of primary school and 150,754 mathematics exercise books for pupils in the fifth year of primary school • Purchase of 4,760 school kits for classrooms • Purchase of 255,209 school kits for primary school pupils • Purchase of 18,879 school kits for girls in lower secondary school, distributed in the six regions that are covered by the Global Partnership for Education programme (Adrar, Tagant, Hodh ech-Chargui, Brakna, Gorgol and Guidimaka)
Improvement of initial teacher training	• Report on a study of classroom practices, showing the impact of contextual variables relating to the student, the teacher and the organization of the class and the school • Revision of curricula taught at primary school teacher training colleges

Measures taken to improve quality	*Action taken by the Department*
	• Evaluation of new trainees at all primary school teacher training colleges (Nouakchott, Akjoujt, Kaédi and Aioun) in 2016
	• Evaluation of second year trainees at the primary school teacher training colleges in Aioun and Nouakchott
	• Training of 79 instructors at two primary school teacher training colleges (Nouakchott and Aioun) on the subject of evaluation
	• Training of 101 instructors at the four primary school teacher training colleges on curricula and the teaching method that has been adopted (competency-based approach)
	• Support for initial language training for 1,323 trainees at all four primary school teacher training colleges
	• Training of 76 teachers at demonstration schools on hosting trainee teachers
	• Language refresher courses for 33 members of managerial staff from the four primary school teacher training colleges
	• Purchase of library resources for the primary school teacher training colleges in Nouakchott and Aioun
Improvement of science teaching through the provision of resources for experiments, such as laboratories, laboratory assistants, equipment and materials	• Provision of educational display boards to 2 schools
	• Provision of chemicals to 10 schools
	• Provision of educational display boards and equipment to the secondary school teacher training college (4 boards and 1 set of free fall apparatus)
	• Production of 15 educational display boards
	• Mass production of 75 units
	• Packaging of chemicals for 12 schools
	• Repair and maintenance of 38 broken electrical devices in secondary schools
	• Design of new equipment prototypes (free fall apparatus)
	• Organization of a two-month training course for 15 laboratory management students enrolled at the secondary school teacher training college
	• Organization of a one-month work placement in school laboratories in Nouakchott for 15 laboratory management students enrolled at the secondary school teacher training college
	• Preparation of experiment worksheets in physical and natural sciences
	• Supervision of 11 teachers of physics, chemistry and natural sciences in schools with equipped laboratories in Nouakchott
	• Organization of two visits to various laboratories in

Measures taken to improve quality	*Action taken by the Department*
	Nouakchott
	• Promotion of a science culture through the participation of more than 5,000 lower and upper secondary school students in competitions (Olympiads and problem-solving challenges)
Promotion of excellence through the opening of upper secondary schools of excellence in all governorates	• Opening of three new primary schools of excellence
	• Opening of three upper secondary schools of excellence in east Nouakchott, Guidimaka and Brakna
	• Creation of a database of schools of excellence
Launch of a project targeting priority education zones, designed to increase school enrolment in problem areas such as *adwaba*	• Establishment of 19 academic success networks in priority education zones
	• Opening of 167 canteens in priority education zones
	• 493 school canteens received food baskets (89,495 beneficiaries, of whom 46,679, equivalent to 51 per cent, were girls)
	• Training on canteen management and school hygiene for 300 school canteen managers (headteachers, teachers and parents of students)
	• Preparation of a National School Food Policy and adoption of the policy by the Council of Ministers in November 2017
Establishment of pilot upper secondary schools in all governorates	Opening of a pilot upper secondary school in Kaédi
Increase in admission capacity through the building of primary schools and local lower secondary schools in rural areas and the opening of school canteens	409 primary schools
	2 teacher training colleges
	82 secondary schools
	1,238 classrooms
	169 latrines
	1,600 renovation measures
Improvement of the school environment through the provision of access to water and electricity and the revitalization of sanitation facilities in schools	• Improvement of school surveillance and security in the various departments of the regions of Nouakchott
	• Provision of water and sanitation services to 45 schools in Hodh ech-Chargui
	• Construction of water and sanitation infrastructure in 61 schools in Brakna
	• Follow-up mission to assess the sustainability of water and sanitation infrastructure in 20 schools in Assaba
	• Training and awareness-raising for headteachers and presidents of parents' associations in 20 schools in Assaba
	• Organization of sports and cultural activities
	• Launch of a campaign to combat drug use in school settings, in collaboration with the Association of Mayors of Mauritania

Measures taken to improve quality	*Action taken by the Department*	
Introduction of an education management information system, school mapping and an effective monitoring and evaluation system	• Location and preparation of premises to host the data centre for the education management information system • Establishment of four centres with a view to redeploying inspectors in order to decentralize secondary education inspection services	
Strengthening of institutional management and measures to increase the relevance and effectiveness of reforms	• Review and revision of primary and upper and lower secondary school curricula • Establishment of a task force to determine the main thrusts of the planned reforms: • Teacher training and professionalization • Access to inclusive and equitable quality education for all • Promotion of science teaching	
Introduction of participatory management through the establishment of school management committees	• Establishment of a task force to define the terms of reference of school management committees	
Budget of the Ministry of National Education under the overall State budget (billions of ouguiyas (MRU))	36.4 in 2009	47.4 in 2018
Current expenditure on education as a percentage of current State expenditure, excluding debt	20 per cent in 2009	21 per cent in 2018
Current expenditure on education as a percentage of gross domestic product	3.6 per cent in 2009	4.01 per cent in 2018

11. **Please inform the Committee of measures taken to eliminate the exploitation of children, in particular in agricultural work and the worst forms of child labour, including domestic work, begging and slavery-like practices. Please also indicate the measures taken to protect the children concerned, in particular Haratine children and children with disabilities.**

53. Child labour is a national concern: the Government is determined to address this serious problem, which is a threat to the country's future.

54. Conscious of the gravity of the issue, the Government has demonstrated its resolve firstly by ratifying the main international conventions on child labour (the International Labour Organization (ILO) Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)) and then by drawing up a National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour.

55. The National Action Plan is designed to help to eradicate all forms of child labour, especially the worst forms, over the period 2015–2020, with a particular focus on the agricultural sector, the domestic services sector (which is the subject of specific regulations), begging (which has been addressed through a dedicated programme) and any other form of labour discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity or disability.

56. The Plan constitutes the Government's strategic framework for the eradication of child labour by 2020.

12. With regard to the minimum age of criminal responsibility, please indicate whether children aged 7 years and above can be charged under national legislation, including antiterrorism legislation. Please also provide information on measures taken to ensure that children whose age cannot be determined are not treated as adults and that children are held in detention only as a last resort, and separately from adults.

57. The law establishes 15 years old as the minimum age of criminal responsibility. At the age of 7 years old, children are considered to lack responsibility and cannot be accused of ordinary law offences nor, by extension, of terrorist acts.

58. Protective measures are ordered in respect of children under 15 years old who commit offences.

Part II

13. The Committee invites the State party to provide a brief update (no more than three pages) on the information presented in its report with regard to:

(a) New bills or laws, and their respective regulations;

(b) New institutions (and their mandates) or institutional reforms;

(c) Recently introduced policies, programmes and action plans, and their scope and financing;

(d) Recent ratifications of human rights instruments.

(a) Adoption of the law criminalizing discrimination

59. This new law covers all forms of discrimination. It contains a definition of discrimination that fully incorporates the definition established in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and transposes the Convention's provisions into national law.

60. The General Child Protection Code, which prohibits and establishes penalties for female genital mutilation, has been adopted.

61. The constitutional reform of 2017 reaffirmed the human rights established in the constitutional preamble, which states that: "The Mauritanian people, fortified by their spiritual values and the development of their civilization, solemnly proclaim their attachment to Islam and to the principles of democracy, as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948 and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 28 June 1981 and by the other international conventions to which Mauritania is a party."

(b) New institutions (and their mandates) or institutional reforms

62. The National Council for Children was established.

63. The High Council for Fatwas and Administrative Appeals was strengthened by virtue of the recent constitutional reforms, through which the High Council subsumed the former Islamic High Council.

64. The National Human Rights Commission was reformed through the adoption of a bill modifying and replacing certain provisions of Act No. 2010-031 of 20 July 2010, pursuant to which the Commission was established. The reforms were intended to consolidate the Commission's autonomy and expertise and to increase the professionalism with which it carries out its duties, in keeping with the democratization of the State and society.

65. The new law modifies, supplements and replaces provisions of articles 6, 9, 11, 12, 16 and 17 in order to ensure the implementation of international human rights commitments,

particularly the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. It allows for due account to be taken of such recommendations with a view to consolidating the professionalism, competency and pluralism of the Commission's membership and to meeting the other requirements of the Paris Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights.

(c) *Recently introduced policies, programmes and action plans, and their scope and financing*

66. The National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour was adopted on 14 May 2015 and has been given a budget of 5 billion ouguiyas covering a period of four years. The National Action Plan is already being implemented and some targeted activities have already taken place.

(d) *Recent ratifications of human rights instruments*

67. The Arab Charter on Human Rights has been ratified.

Part III

Data, statistics and other information, if available

14. Please provide consolidated information for the past three years on the budget lines allocated to the children's and social sectors, indicating the percentage of the total national budget and of the gross national product that each budget line represents. Please also provide information on the geographic allocation of these resources.

68. The concept of a budget line for social protection is a relatively new one and its scope is not yet clear. The analysis given in this report is therefore limited to budget appropriations allocated to social sectors that are earmarked for advancing the rights of children and women. A drop in the value of raw materials over the past few years has naturally had a negative impact on the country's finances, including the budgets of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Engineering and Sanitation, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Traditional Teaching, and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family, which oversees social affairs in the broad sense. These five ministries, which run the country's essential social services, have been allocated 16 per cent of the State budget, equivalent to 22.69 billion ouguiyas (MRU) over a period of three years. Essential social services are also provided by other major stakeholders, including the Tadamoun National Agency for the Eradication of the Vestiges of Slavery, Social Integration and Poverty Alleviation and the Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Land Management.

The five ministries' budgets over the past three years are shown in the following table:

Ministries institutions	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*
Ministry of National Education	43.7	45.6	47.4
Ministry of Health	20.7	20.5	21
Ministry of Engineering and Sanitation	4.1	4.3	3.7
Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family	2.4	2.5	2.4
Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Traditional Teaching	3.3	3.2	2.1
Total essential social services	74.2	76.1	76.6
Percentage of the State budget allocated to essential social services	15	15	16

Source: Étude relative à l'Analyse des allocations budgétaires allouées aux secteurs sociaux destinées à la réalisation des droits de l'enfant et de la femme 2013 à 2017 (UNICEF 2018).

69. The Government's activities have been focused on child protection and the welfare of the Mauritanian family as a whole, within a framework of harmonious social development.

70. Several activities have focused on types of education and childcare — specifically, the organization and equipping of preschool institutions; the training of preschool teachers; the child protection system; nutritional, sanitary and psychosocial care for children; and increasing human resources in a number of the sector's skills areas in the sector.

71. The National Council for Children was restructured in 2017 and became operational in 2018. It assists the Ministry responsible for children's affairs in the coordination, preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies and programmes relating to children's affairs throughout the country.

15. Please provide further information on the resources allocated over the past three years to:

(a) Increase the percentage of children registered at birth or registered retroactively;

(b) Reduce the disparities between rural and urban areas with regard to access to basic health services;

(c) Improve the delivery of basic services, including health services, access to drinking water, sanitation and protection, for children in school settings;

(d) Implement the National Child Protection Strategy.

72. The total annual budget allocated to children's affairs by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family is more than 50 million ouguiyas (MRU).

Budget (millions of MRU)	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*
Children's Affairs Directorate	0.86	0.86	0.76
Preschool Teacher Training Centre	11.85	11.85	11.67
Centre for the Protection and Social Integration of Children	11.19	12.2	13.15
Centre for the Education and Social Advancement of Children with Disabilities	6.0	6.0	6.46
National Nutrition Programme	6.5	6.5	6.5
Cash transfers for children with multiple disabilities		2.94	3.0

73. Investments in construction and the salaries of social workers, preschool teachers and other personnel are not included in the budget shown above.

74. Human resources in this area consist of State social workers and civil society actors.

16. Please provide, if available, updated statistical data for the past three years, disaggregated by age, sex, ethnic origin, national origin, geographic location and socioeconomic status, on:

(a) Child marriages;

(b) Children who are registered at birth or at a later time, particularly in rural areas;

(c) Pregnancies and cases of maternal mortality among young and teenage girls;

(d) The number of cases of abuse and violence against children, including in the form of corporal punishment, with additional information on the type of assistance offered to child victims and the follow-up given to such cases, including prosecutions of perpetrators and sentences imposed;

(e) Prosecutions of cases of sexual violence and rape involving children and the outcomes thereof, including the penalties imposed on perpetrators and the reparations afforded to victims;

(f) The number of cases of female genital mutilation, indicating the follow-up given to such cases, the sentences imposed on perpetrators and the reparations and compensation afforded to victims;

(g) The number of practitioners of female genital mutilation who have been offered State support to help them to find alternative sources of income;

(h) Children who are subjected to forced feeding (gavage);

(i) The number of children recruited by armed groups, particularly children who are asylum seekers or refugees.

Children's health rights indicators			
Registration			
	Birth registration		
		Percentage of children under 5 years old whose birth registration was delayed	65.6
Access to basic services			
	Access to health care		
		Health coverage within a 5-kilometre radius	83
		Percentage of children aged between 12 and 23 months who received the BCG vaccine before their first birthday	83
	Access to drinking water		
		Percentage of household members using improved drinking water sources	62
	Access to sanitation		
		Percentage of households with soap and other cleaning products	46.5
Adolescent health*			
	Pregnancies and maternal mortality among young and teenage girls		
		Maternal mortality rate	582 per 100,000
		No data disaggregated by age	
	Fertility rate among teenage girls		
		Fertility rate of women aged between 15 and 19	84
	Marriage before the age of 15		
		Percentage of women aged between 15 and 49 married before the age of 15	15.6
	Marriage before the age of 18		
		Percentage of women aged between 20 and 49 married before the age of 18	35.2

Children's health rights indicators		
	Percentage of girls aged between 15 and 19 currently married	27.8
	Prevalence of female genital mutilation/circumcision among girls	53.2
Practitioners of female circumcision		
No data available		

- There is no disaggregated data on pregnancies and the maternal mortality rate among adolescent girls. The maternal mortality rate in 2015 was 582 deaths per 100,000 births recorded in the 2013 census (UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2015).

17. Please provide data for the past three years, disaggregated by age, sex, socioeconomic background, ethnic origin and geographic location, on the situation of children deprived of a family environment, including the number of children who have been:

(a) Separated from their parents;

(b) Placed in an institution (disaggregated according to the duration of placement);

(c) Placed in foster care;

(d) Adopted within the country or abroad.

75. Between August 2010 and June 2016, 415 minors in conflict with the law were admitted to the Reception and Social Reintegration Centre for Children in Conflict with the Law.

The following table shows the number of children admitted to the Centre each year.

Year	*Number of minors*	*Percentage*
2010	29	7
2011	48	12
2012	73	18
2013	71	17
2014	81	19
2015	84	20
1/2016 to 6/2016	30	7

76. The age breakdown of minors under the Centre's care is as follows:

- 91 per cent between the ages of 13 and 18
- 70 per cent over the age of 14
- 7 per cent under the age of 13
- 24 per cent aged 15

Minors held in the Centre, disaggregated by sex

Sex	*Number of minors*	*Percentage*
Male	Male	94
Female	23	6

77. Of the minors held in the Centre, 94 per cent are boys and 6 per cent are girls.

Minors held in the Centre, disaggregated by offence

Offence	*Number of minors*	*Percentage*
Aggravated theft	43	11
Battery causing bodily injury	18	5
Drug use	12	3
Leading an organized gang	10	3
Murder	21	5
Sexual relations outside marriage	17	4
Attempted highway robbery	13	3
Theft	218	55
Rape	27	7
Vagrancy	19	5

78. The most common offence among the minors held in the Centre is theft, representing 55 per cent of all offences, followed by aggravated theft, which represents 11 per cent.

Minors held in the Centre, disaggregated by place of birth

Place of birth	*Number of minors*	*Percentage*
Urban areas	268	80
Semi-urban areas	51	15
Rural areas	9	3
Abroad	5	2

Length of time spent in the Centre by minors, in months

Number of months	*Number of minors*	*Percentage*
1	63	29
2	31	14
3	26	12
4	7	3
5	16	7
6	11	5
7	19	9
8	3	1
9	11	5
10	3	1
11	5	2
12	12	6
13	4	2
18	4	2

Figures for Nouakchott Prison

Number of minors held in the prison each year

Year	*Number*	*Percentage*
2014	6	9.7
2015	32	51.6
2016	24	38.7

Number of minors held in the prison, disaggregated by offence

Offence	*Number*	*Percentage*
Battery causing bodily injury	4	6
Drug use	7	11
Leading an organized gang	16	26
Murder	3	5
Theft	27	44
Rape	5	8
Total	**62**	**100**

Number of minors held in the prison, disaggregated by age

Age	*Number of minors*	*Percentage*
15	6	10
16	18	29
17	25	40
18	13	21
Total	**62**	**100**

18. Please provide data for the past three years, disaggregated by age, sex, type of disability, ethnic origin and geographic location, on the number of children with disabilities:

(a) Living with their families;

(b) Living in institutions;

(c) Attending mainstream primary schools;

(d) Attending mainstream secondary schools;

(e) Attending special schools;

(f) Out-of-school;

(g) Abandoned by their families.

79. The Centre for the Protection and Social Integration of Children oversees the foster care of abandoned children who have been placed with foster families:

Category	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*
Children placed with foster families	41	37	38
Children placed in institutional care	733	798	912

80. The details pertaining to children with disabilities housed in care institutions for children with disabilities that come under the authority of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family for the year 2017/18 are as follows:

Nature of disability	*Number of children housed*	*Number of boys*	*Number of girls*
Hearing impairment	330	198	132
Visual impairment	132	65	67
Multiple disabilities	66	35	31
Physical impairment	44	19	25
Intellectual impairment	103	64	39
Autism	54	29	25
Down syndrome	28	13	15
Late development of language faculties	150	75	75
Total	**910**	**500**	**410**

81. All the children with disabilities who are attending special schools live with their families. Some receive aid from governmental and non-governmental bodies, such as the Centre for the Education and Social Advancement of Children with Disabilities, which catered for:

In 2015/16	149 deaf students	24 blind students		
In 2016/17	175 deaf students	34 blind students	26 students with autism	
In 2017/18	175 deaf students	39 blind students	21 students with autism	35 students with intellectual impairments

19. Please provide disaggregated data on the number of children in conflict with the law who have been arrested and placed in detention, including pretrial detention, and who have benefited from diversion programmes. Please also indicate the number of juvenile courts in the State party.

82. Between August 2010 and June 2016, 415 minors in conflict with the law were admitted to the Reception and Social Reintegration Centre for Children in Conflict with the Law. The following table shows the number of children admitted to the Centre each year.

Year	*Number of minors*	*Percentage*
2010	29	7
2011	48	12
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2013	71	17
2014	81	19
2015	84	20
1/2016 to 6/2016	30	7

83. The age breakdown of minors under the Centre's care is as follows:

- 91 per cent between the ages of 13 and 18
- 70 per cent over the age of 14
- 7 per cent under the age of 13

- 24 per cent aged 15

Number of minors held in the Centre, disaggregated by sex

Sex	*Number*	*Percentage*
Male	Male	94
Female	23	6

84. Of the minors held in the Centre for Children, 94 per cent are boys and 6 per cent are girls.

Number of minors held in the Centre, disaggregated by offence

Offence	*Number*	*Percentage*
Aggravated theft	43	11
Battery causing bodily injury	18	5
Drug use	12	3
Leading an organized gang	10	3
Murder	21	5
Sexual relations outside marriage	17	4
Attempted highway robbery	13	3
Theft	218	55
Rape	27	7
Vagrancy	19	5

85. The most common offence among the minors held in the Centre is theft, representing 55 per cent of all offences, followed by aggravated theft, which represents 11 per cent.

Number of minors held in the Centre, disaggregated by place of birth

Place of birth	*Number*	*Percentage*
Urban areas	268	80
Semi-urban areas	51	15
Rural areas	9	3
Abroad	5	2

Length of time spent in the Centre by minors, in months

Number of months	*Number of minors*	*Percentage*
1	63	29
2	31	14
3	26	12
4	7	3
5	16	7
6	11	5
7	19	9
8	3	1
9	11	5
10	3	1
11	5	2

Number of months	*Number of minors*	*Percentage*
12	12	6
13	4	2
18	4	2

Figures for Nouakchott Prison

Number of minors held in the prison, by year

Year	*Number*	*Percentage*
2014	6	9.7
2015	32	51.6
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Number of minors held in the prison, disaggregated by offence

Offence	*Number*	*Percentage*
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Number of minors held in the prison, disaggregated by age

Age	*Number of minors*	*Percentage*
15	6	10
16	18	29
17	25	40
18	13	21
Total	**62**	**100**

20. Please provide the Committee with an update of any data in the report which may have been superseded by more recent data or affected by new developments.

21. In addition, the State party may list areas affecting children that it considers to be of priority with regard to the implementation of the Convention.

86. The priority areas for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are:

- Updating the National Child Protection Strategy
- Establishing a sustainable child protection system that covers the entire country
- Recruiting social workers
- Establishing specialized training centres for social workers (social counsellors, specialized educators, social assistants, etc.)
- Developing and increasing the number of public sector, non-governmental and private sector bodies specializing in the protection and promotion of children's rights

- Building, equipping and maintaining public sector kindergartens and community childcare facilities
- Training and recruiting preschool teachers and other personnel specialized in early childhood development
- Re-electing members to the children's parliament